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GYRE



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GYRE

LONGWOOD COLLEGE
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA
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From the Song—"Since You Asked" by Judy Collins

on album—**Wildflowers**

As my life spells into yours
Changing with the hours
Filling up the world with time
Turning time to flowers
I can show you all the songs
That I never sang to one mom before
Nothing more.



THE SANCTUARY

The dimly lit pew, which now—as always—creaks its dissent of a fidgety occupant, offers repose for the weary one lost in her simple meditation. After four decades of familiarity, the scene continues to instill amazement. It must be age that makes the difference, or maybe children, or maybe a husband who teases about those horrible grey strands. But only a short time ago (if thirty years may be called such) this sanctuary was one big mysterious wonder of crimson and purple stained glass and gold-sparkled milk glass lamps. Later, eyes transformed it into a site, not of mystery, but of serenity, with cool green walls, tall and stately, and rows of polished mahogany pews. Years passed; memory combined it all into a fascinating picture of mysterious stained glass enclosed within serene green borders.

Today is not so unusual; the sun of this late winter afternoon has chosen the stained glass frame of Mary on her knees, wiping the feet of her Master. Scarlet rays from her gown tinge the soft green hues of the carpet; the reflection of gold from her brass cup sparkles so brightly it hurts the eye; and as she stoops wiping his feet with her yellow air, the splendiddness of it all humbles the onlooker. This Mary of virtuous simplicity enobles the setting.

Yes, the place is the same. Stained glass colors still seem mysterious; soft green walls still reflect tranquility; and even the eyes, (though maybe more shadowed with age) that behold the view, are just like yesterday's. How amazing. It must be the memory behind those eyes that has become so altered through the years.

Inside a hymnal is scrawled the name **Marie**, the same name secretly inscribed by the same hand one Holy morning. At this place Marie had leaned lovingly on her father's shoulder for a decade of Sundays and stared at the burning lamps around the green walls and at the beautiful Mary in the stained glass. Years drifted by and Marie still went often to the sanctuary; the vision of the scarlet-gowned Mary remained fixed like an idol in her mind.

Years traveled more rapidly, and Marie was ready to leave the quiet days of childhood when she knew how to love little things like leaning on her father's shoulder. She did leave. After two years at the University, Marie tired of the work, the people. She took a small position in the city. She met a man one who taught her how to love, and the love Marie had known for the little things lost their relevance to her. She shared her life with him; one day, Marie even shared her secret of the green sanctuary and the virtuous Mary in the scarlet stained glass. He laughed. Marie, too, began to laugh and after many days of secret anguish, she had forgotten the childish whim altogether. Her life changed as she found herself a wife, a mother, a woman.

Her father called. Marie went back to the serenity of the green chapel to be with him for the last time. The silence of death in his marble repose chilled the remnants of her memory. The shoulder Marie leaned upon was not her father's; it belonged to another man, a man whom she hardly knew when sitting with him in the dark mahogany pews . . .

Marie shakes herself from meditation; the sanctuary is darkened now without sunlight. She finds repose with the mysterious stained glass and the cool green walls—it gives the only peace she understands. Marie gazes solemnly at the scarlet gown of the beautiful Mary and suddenly a flaw catches her eye—a ragged hole broken there by some subordinate element. Marie bends her head and cries.

Joan Barnes

DEPARTURE

Several times I have journeyed from place to place, from
here to there
Through towns, cities, and fields;
Moved by the excitement of tinsel and toasting holidays;
Passing through ghost towns of loneliness and deserts of
emptiness.
Face pressed against a filmy window I watch the dark
sullen clouds bury the ash gray world of silent streets,
Pale rain falling into the endless ocean of darkness,
Winter wind whistles through the naked woods.
I travel through the ethereal fog of depression
Aware of the soothing joyous slumber in cool, sunkissed
grass
In meadows of lilacs and sky blue haze
Embraced by love and life, my essence in your existence.
But in the trains, buses, and cars of my life I remember
painfully
How we love, we separate, we wander.

Ethel Reiter

"SORRY, WRONG NUMBER"

*Time — measure it, weigh it
Is there enough, or too little
Does it really fly?
Or does it creep slowly down the paths of your mind?
Minutes, hours, seconds,
They mean nothing.
Except maybe that we never take time to see each
other.*

*Sometimes in the morning I look at you sleeping,
lying on your back,
And I see the warmth of the world in your body.
But looking through the ice-covered window,
I see the Neon-lighted world and cold steel shells
of men,
With their plastic personalities, and it spoils the
beauty of the moment.*

*Pills, trips, minis, maxis.
Beer drinking, chain smoking, keys rattling.
Always searching.
Times wasting, times passing.
This is a recording,*

*Sorry wrong number.
Stop! Look for the image of times past, present,
and future.
Go by the beat of your heart, not that of your watch.
I realize now that Time will never win.*

*This is a recording.
Sorry, wrong number.*

Cathy Vanderberry

ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE—

OR HOW I NEVER HAD TO

The day dawned as all days of departure should—sunny and bright and ready to supply the best possible light for the fulfillment of my expectations of the place. Everything I'd ever read about it had been of a sunny nature, and although I hadn't talked to too many people personally, I figured these were excellent signs.

Dad had loaded the car with everything that we figured from looking at the catalogue and pre-mailed orientation schedule, I could expect to be using regularly. Tennis rackets and guitars are always such a packing problem. But just as we were about to pull away from the curb Mother came running from the house with the all important white dress which I had left behind. From what I could gather, ceremonies requiring a white dress were pretty regular occasions and I certainly would've been at a loss without one.

On arrival my eyes were flooded with flocks of girls identifiable to fellow flock members by the attractive little uniforms of their particular group. On attempting to get settled into my room, I found, through frequent interruptions, that I had my own personal representative from each individual flock. After the week was over and the dresses put away, however, I could never seem to remember which girl had represented which flock, and which dress had gone with which girl.

The first week was fun. I did not feel at all strange. What with every minute filled with meetings, song contests, skit preparations, and parties, it was just like being back in high school. To think I had ever been worried about adjusting to college life! And the best part was that as the first week became the second, and that the first month, and on into the next—this pattern never changed. What a way to spend your college years! Oh, there were classes, sure, and an occasional required speaker, but they were usually pretty dull and could be avoided with a little effort.

When Thanksgiving finally arrived I could hardly wait to get home, to see my old friends, and to tell them about all the fun I was having at college. But it was kind of strange, after the initial greetings and the usual exchange of pleasantries, we didn't seem to have much in common anymore. Oh sure, I told them about the parties, the skits, and the song contests; but I guess there's not but so much you can say about those things. And besides, they seemed more interested in the war, the moratorium, pollution and peace. I never did like to talk much about things I wasn't up on, and in the last few months these things hadn't been of too much concern to me and my school friends.

That holiday was kind of a disappointment really, but I guess things are supposed to change when you go off to school. At any rate, I was relieved to get back to my campus, and what with all the preparations for a big upcoming festival I really never had too much more time to think about it.

Catherine Leary





"Would that you could live on the fragrance of the earth, and like an air plant be sustained by sunlight." Kahlil Gibran, **The Prophet.**



"Hunger is insolent and will be fed." Homer, *Odyssey* Bk. vii, l. 300.

STRANGERS

I come to you whenever you call,
I lie beside you; we talk.
You tell me you love me
And when I ask you to explain why,
You are at a loss for words.
Funny, isn't it?
Making love is so easy, so mechanical—
Words aren't wasted if love is missing.
Please talk to me.
Or is love missing in this room too?

LINES

BY

TOUCHING

I wish I could take your hand
And lead you down the beach.
I'd trip you so that we could roll together in the sand.
I love to touch you—
I feel so rich then.
Or maybe you would walk with me in the meadow,
And you could tell me stories while I pick flowers.
To take your hand, or look into your eyes—
I can't do these things—
People have tagged these emotions "love",
I can't tell them that it's only friendship—
I'm not ashamed to say "I like you",
I'd be lying if I said "I love you".
And this love, what is it?

JANUS

I love your hair, or is it yours today?
Your eyes look beautiful; but weren't they blue yesterday?
Those lashes are so long—they almost look false,
Oh baby, who are you?
Remove that translucent powder.
You told me you loved me.
Did your love wear make-up too?

Oh, baby,
Lies hurt.

CATHY

I used to like to swim—floating on my back was especially
nice.

But now floating, looking up to the sky,
My eyes become clouded with smog,
My face is getting scarred by crashing planes,
My body is slowly deteriorating—
Atomic materials fall to the earth.
Someday, the sky will meet the earth,
And we will be crushed by our own mistakes.
Maybe I'll swim face down.
Help, I'm drowning in sorrow!

SNOW

Sitting at my window I see the snow falling,
Cold, sterile, untouched—purity.
We never think of that anymore.
Lazy, soft, uninhibited.
Funny how the snow remains white until it hits the earth,
Maybe it's trying to tell us something.

VANDERBERRY



WE TOFF
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IVERSALE

THE BOX

The boy was small, even for twelve he was small—and dark. The new black suit hung around his body, making a mockery of his limbs. He did not quite meet Macy's expectations for the average twelve-year-old frame.

He was kneeling at the polished wooden railing provided for those who wished to pray—hard mahogany pressing against his knees, hot tears against his eyelids, and the starched white collar against the soft flesh of his neck. Before him was the long, empty box, its steel and veneer finish trying hard to project an image of dignity and eternal fortitude. Though it contained the preserved and powdered remains of his father, Frankie knew the box was empty.

"Go ahead and cry, Frankie."

He looked up into the cosmetic-counter face of his Aunt Mary. He stared beyond her into the garden of ladies—their shallow minds screaming at him through the whispers from their crimson lips . . . "Aren't the flowers lovely" . . . "Just like he was in life" . . . "As though he were sleeping".

Frankie broke past Aunt Mary and into the side room where the men stood smoking. A sweaty palm encircled his shoulders and came to rest on his coat sleeve. He felt its strength jostle him in and out against his uncle's side.

"This is Joe's boy. He'll be a great man someday." Uncle Jack stood above him, the odor of liquor drifting down through the already stagnant air, as his coarse voice echoed against the walls of Frankie's head.

The men were all around him—smiling and smoking. The smell of whiskey, cologne, smoke, and flowers; the sight of teeth and flab and middle-aged men threatened to suffocate him. Frankie broke away, walking—walking swiftly through the ladies, through the pseudo-Victorian parlor and out onto the street.

It was raining, and the raindrops were clean and cold against the heat which had brought a scarlet tinge to his face. His best shoes soaking up the water from the pavement, his collar wilting, and his head inhaling the cold November freshness; he had escaped—escaped from the stifling women, escaped from the insensitive men, from the sickening air and the gaudy Victorian atmosphere, but most of all from the stiff, cold stranger who lay affectedly in the white satin lining of the box.

Frankie was relieved. It was good to be with his father again. For what remained of his father was not in the polished steel box, nor among the mourners; but here, standing in the rain, in his own clutched hands and burning flesh, and in his heart.

Catherine Leary

*There exists a summer
I have yet not seen . . .
Waiting down some street in Washington.
It could be Atlanta, New York,
or Sydney — that sun-colored dream.
Constitution Avenue cars speed, rumble, beep . . .
An orderly chaos somewhat like my mind.
And I wait here on my shelf for the questions
I create
to answer . . .
like a patent-pending,
or some petunia in Shirley's garden.
Somewhere there are dreams
but in the nightmare of self
I lose them.
Child with glowing eyes,
laugh while you are yet free
to forget the names of towns and streets,
and questions without answers.*

Salli Akers

RECOLLECTIONS

*It's funny
How the sad in life
Is often drawn so near,
And how it's held so tight to breast,
And kept to draw a tear.*

*. . . how in the times when memory haunts
The empty hours at hand,
The mind draws from its reservoir
The past's small grain of sand.*

B. J. Rogers



"Time's horses gallop down the lessening hill," Richard Le Gallienne, *Time*.



A "LONGWOOD LADY" IN THE CIVIL WAR?

In 1865 when the Union Army was led to Appomattox from Richmond by the brilliant strategy of Robert E. Lee, where was Longwood or that school which was later to become Longwood? Were the students of this female academy told to go home in 1861 for the duration of the war? Did the school stay open and active during the campaign until those last days when the armies came marching upon the small defenseless school? Were there girls at the school who brought the brave wounded soldiers to their infirmary? Did the students feed the soldiers with their small wartime supplies of food? This has been lost somewhere in the ancient files of Longwood. The question is, what would a modern "Longwood Lady" do in the same situation?

Here we are in 1860. The presidential election is proving to be very important to the local men's college. The important issue at Longwood is who will win the skit and booth competition during the "fun" weekend about a week before the election. The campaign is becoming more and more emotional. Chi and the Young Democrats are trying to outdo each other in the appearance of their booths. The red and whites are confident about winning the skit competition.

The "fun" weekend is over. No one who expected to win the competitions did win and so it went with the national election. Lincoln won. The usual remarks about this at Longwood were . . . "Is he good looking?" and "Is he married?" It has been rumored that Lincoln is a hippie because he wears a beard, but this is generally considered to be false because not even the decadent North would elect a hippie as President of the United States.

South Carolina has seceded and Longwood is busy preparing for Christmas. Everyone has started to decorate their doors. After Christmas vacation, other Southern States secede, Virginia hasn't seceded, yet, so tours to the North do not have to be stopped.

In April, Fort Sumter is fired upon, and the rest of the Southern states secede. At least all of the states that will. Longwood is preparing for May Day.

For the September of 1861, the new freshmen are not required to buy a green blouse and a white skirt because material is becoming harder to get. The largest difference in that September was the lack of male companionship. The local men's college had contributed its share to protect the women and children in the South from the barbarian hordes from the North. The atmosphere at Longwood is beginning to become depressed. The students are cheered by occasional glimpses of scouting parties for the armies. Those barbarians are "cute" after all.

1862 passed, as did 1863, and then 1864. Early in 1865, the armies became busy around Richmond. The girls from that area were worried about their families and friends. And where would any "Longwood Lady" go to shop if Richmond were destroyed? Well, Lee left Richmond to draw the Union army out into the open where the cowards would have to fight. In the very first part of April, Lee's army started to pass Farmville, slowly drawing Grant into his trap. The "Longwood Ladies" began to line up to see the army march pass. Unfortunately, most of the students became so amazed to see men that all they could do was count the soldiers like cattle.

The next day, the Northern army started to march past Farmville. The students were ready. They acquired packed lunches from their food service so they could have picnics with the soldiers. The soldiers were not allowed to grow used to this food gradually as the students had done, so were taken sick for a week or more. Lee was able to capture the entire Union Army as they rolled and moaned on the ground. This was how the "Longwood Lady" became known as the George Washington of the Confederate States of America.

Elaine Newman

THE CAGE

"Help me! Help me!" she shouted, and the echoes threw back her screams. She pounded with ineffective fists on the heavy glass. "Somebody help me! Please help me!" She fell weeping against the thick translucent walls. "A zoo . . . caught in a zoo . . . caged like . . . an animal . . ." Her sobbing grew louder and more shuddering, more hopeless.

"Marion. Wake up, Marion. You've been having a nightmare." Her British nanny shook her gently. Marion opened her eyes and looked up at the kindly nurse. "Oh, Nanny. It was dreadful. I was like an animal in a cage." The nanny smiled and patted her small charge's shoulder. "You are much too sensitive, Marion. I suppose we shan't go again to the zoo." Marion tried to smile. "Let's not. It's horrible. All those poor, poor animals." The nurse rose with her smile still in place. "Yes, dear. Now, you go back to sleep."

"You caged us, now our time has come." An ape pushed its flat face against the glass. She pulled away, trying to free herself from its malicious gaze. All around her she felt deep hatred burning into her. "Caged. We were caged. You are caged. We are free. You were free. You are caged. You are caged." She turned her head this way and that, now caught by a pair of angry lion's eyes then snared by the vicious sneer on the face of a chimpanzee. All around the glass cage pressed sneering, screeching animals, leering, screaming, "Caged! We were caged. You are caged! You are caged! You are caged! You are . . ." She screamed. "Stop! Stop!"

"Marion! Marion, wake up!" She opened her eyes. A whiff of perfume crossed her nostrils. "Mother?" A silken swish enfolded her and comfortable warmth enveloped her. "Mother. It's awful. There's all these . . ." Her mother pulled her head against a silk perfumed shoulder and stroked her hair. "It's all right, darling. Just a bad dream. Hush now." Her fear slowly faded as her mother hummed to her and sang her back into sleep.

She was alone again. The animals were gone but the invisible cage remained. "Mummy?" She called, sleepily, fear edging around her voice. A chuckle began from somewhere behind her until it roared, echoing through her. "Mummy!" it bellowed. "She calls for her Mummy. Give her Mummy." A heavy bandaged figure flopped beside her as the laughter chorused on. Her hands moved without her will to unwrap the bindings. She uncovered the face and stared in horror at the wrinkled, distorted face of her mother. "Mummy! Mummy! Mummy! Mummy. . ."

She felt a hand shake her shoulder. "Marion! Marion!" She opened her eyes fearfully and peered up into the stern face of her father. "Oh, Daddy, it's awful! There was this. . ." Her father scowled. "Marion, it was just a dream. Don't let it become real." She looked up wide-eyed. "Can it become real, Daddy?" He shook his head impatiently "Of course not." He looked at the clock. "Marion," he was gentler, "it's three o'clock. Try to sleep, dear." He left her and she was alone in the dark. With a shudder, she pulled the blanket up over her head and drifted away.

"Marion. Marion. Marion." It became a chant. She pulled the blanket down until one eye was uncovered. The animals were circling with quiet chant and heavy, dignified step. "Marion. Marion. Marion. We've come. Marion. Marion. Marion. We've come for you. Marion. Marion. Marion. We'll take you away. Marion. Marion. Marion. We'll put you in a cage. Marion. Marion. Marion. We'll take you with us. Marion. Marion. Marion. We'll keep you with us. Marion. Marion. Marion. You are one of us. Marion. Marion. Marion. You are one of us. Marion. Marion. Marion." She opened her mouth to scream. But no sound escaped. Furry and clawed hands seized her. Quick monkey fingers pulled away her gown. Sharp, bird claws clothed her with fur. Small black hooves forced her to her knees, pushed her hands to the floor. "Marion. Marion. Marion. You are one of us. Marion. Marion. Marion. You will come with us. Marion. Marion. Marion." Prodded and pushed, she crawled to the window and out into the night.

The scream of the nanny brought the mummy and daddy. The bed was empty. Her nightgown lay torn and crumpled on the floor. And from the bed to the window was a small set of claw prints that ran away into the forest.

Louise Dougherty

TO R.M.

Tomorrow,
Yesterday's today:
And there are
Strangers
if, no common bond
of love
exists.
Solitary
ways of life
can be lonely
or alone
but very
full—
your thoughts
inspire
a legacy
of inspiration,
even though
you're lonely.
May God bless
lonely
people.

Pat Lucas

THE LAST DAYS

"COUNTY FOG"

*The fog envelopes the county like a shroud,
Seeping up from dank corners beside the road
Until it joins, an ominous yet gentle ghost
Obscuring all from view. The evening
Blues the mist; the subdivisions disappear
Into dragon-haunted fens.*

*The pilgrims crawl their asphalt paths,
Once-bright lights now swimming, blurred.
From deep within me wells the wild urges —
The call to set forth, explore, to kill
Or be killed. Sometimes I sigh, leave my regrets,
And continue with my work, eyes gleaming
With the knowledge of what lurks without.
Sometimes I yield and disappear into the murk,
Nostrils expanded with love of life.
The fog is spiced with danger, danger real
And in the mind. You cannot see —*

But neither can They see you.

*In the morning the white blanket remains,
Hanging weightless as a spider on a string
And keeping with it the aura of mystery.
Fog — bewildering, chill, suggestion of life
And death.*

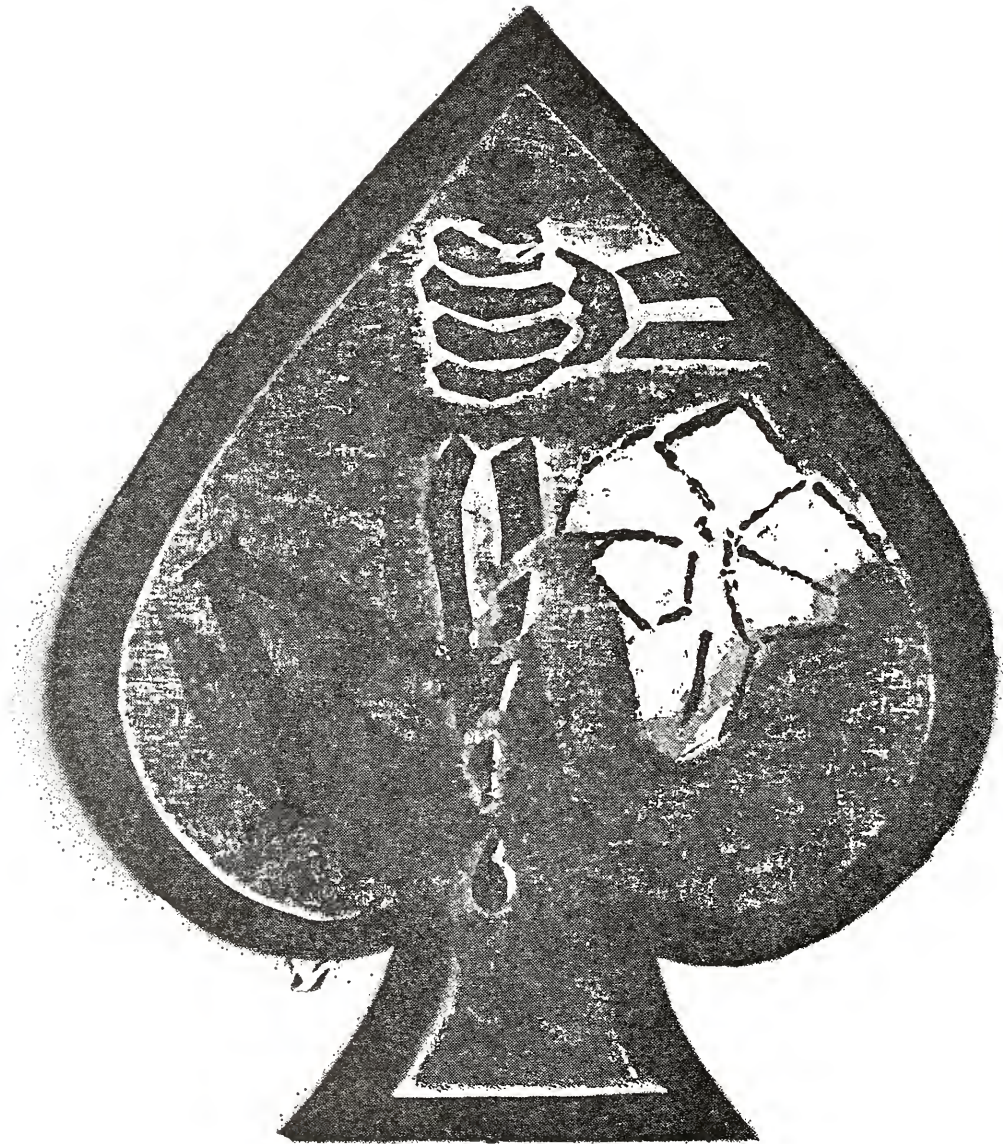
Jenny Young

I have seen death today.
I always wondered what it was like,
And now I know.
It is a silver-ribbon road
Beneath a leaden sky,
Lined with naked trees.
The hollow houses creak their
Blackened timbers, and the doors bang
In the wind. Inexorably
I follow the road, dully, without resistance.
I do not care anymore.
The bitter rain beats in my face,
Purging me of any thoughts
Of those I loved. From all sides,
Lamentation, a melancholy wail
To greet the newly dead.
The grass is brown beneath the charred
And fallen trees.
Ever ahead looms the final mist,
Blocking every turn.
There is no going back, even
If I had the will.
I have seen death,
And I face it now, unafraid.

Jenny Young



"Quoth the Raven, Nevermore." Edgar Allen Poe, *The Raven*.



THEY LIE

I sat brushing my hair. Thoughts of the strangler who had struck again a few nights before wandered through my mind. I could remember the vivid description of the murder in the *Washington Post*.

My arm tiring, I reached across the dressing table and turned off the lamp. I crossed the room, now in complete darkness, and crawled into the big double bed. Sometime later I lay under the rumpled sheets; restlessness seized me. I continued to toss and turn. Trying to go back to sleep, I lay still and began to listen to the sounds of the night, the quiet of the house.

It was then I first heard someone climbing the stairs. At first, my mind accepted it as normal; but instantly I realized that I was supposedly alone in the big old house. My parents were away for the weekend and wouldn't be back until the next morning.

I could feel my body begin to tense. Again I heard the stairs squeak as someone neared the top of the staircase. The key! Where was the key to my room? Maybe I could lock the door. But the key! I couldn't find where I had put the key!

The person had reached the top of the stairs and was walking down the hallway. I tried to move, but my body was paralyzed. I opened my mouth to scream, but found I couldn't. "Oh Lord," I prayed, "please help me!" My body lay motionless upon the bed. My whole being screamed for release of tension that had contracted my muscles so that they would not obey me. Still my mind was alert to the ever-approaching footsteps. It seemed an eternity ago that they started.

Now at my doorway! The doorknob began to turn. Someone walked in through the doorway and crossed to my bed. A dark, looming figure bent over me. I could feel his warm breath on my face! Suddenly he spoke in a hoarse whisper, but his words have since been erased from my mind. As he spoke, I heard someone scream; I did not realize it was I.

My mind, which recalls all the horrifying details of his approach, can recall nothing from that moment on. There is a reason.

Here they tell me that I have suffered a kind of hysteria, that I am in a hospital for the mentally ill. The doctors keep telling me that the man was my father; that my parents had come home early; and that my father was just making sure I was all right. But they lie!

You see, that man was a murderer, the one that strangled all those women in Washington. He isn't my father. Can't you see now? I'm dead. I was the strangler's next victim. They're just lying to me. I'm in hell, and this is part of hell; they never tell you the truth. They lie!

Jane McCaffery

"THREE BLIND MICE"

The social significance contained in the children's song "Three Blind Mice" is at once evident even to the most obtuse. As I have stated in my essay "The Mulberry Bush," children's song's and rhymes contain a wealth of material for the discerning reader.

The mice, of course, are easily the most outstanding symbols in the work. "Three blind mice, Three blind mice, see how they run, see how they run." The poor mice, pursued by inconceivably horrendous foes, blinded by fate, harassed on all sides. "They all ran after the Farmer's wife; she cut off their tails with a carving knife. Did you ever see such a sight in your life as three blind mice?" The tune, a gay lilting affair, provides a grim contrast to the fate of the three pitiful mice, poor victims who, for their harried defence, have their tails brutally abbreviated with that huge carving implement.

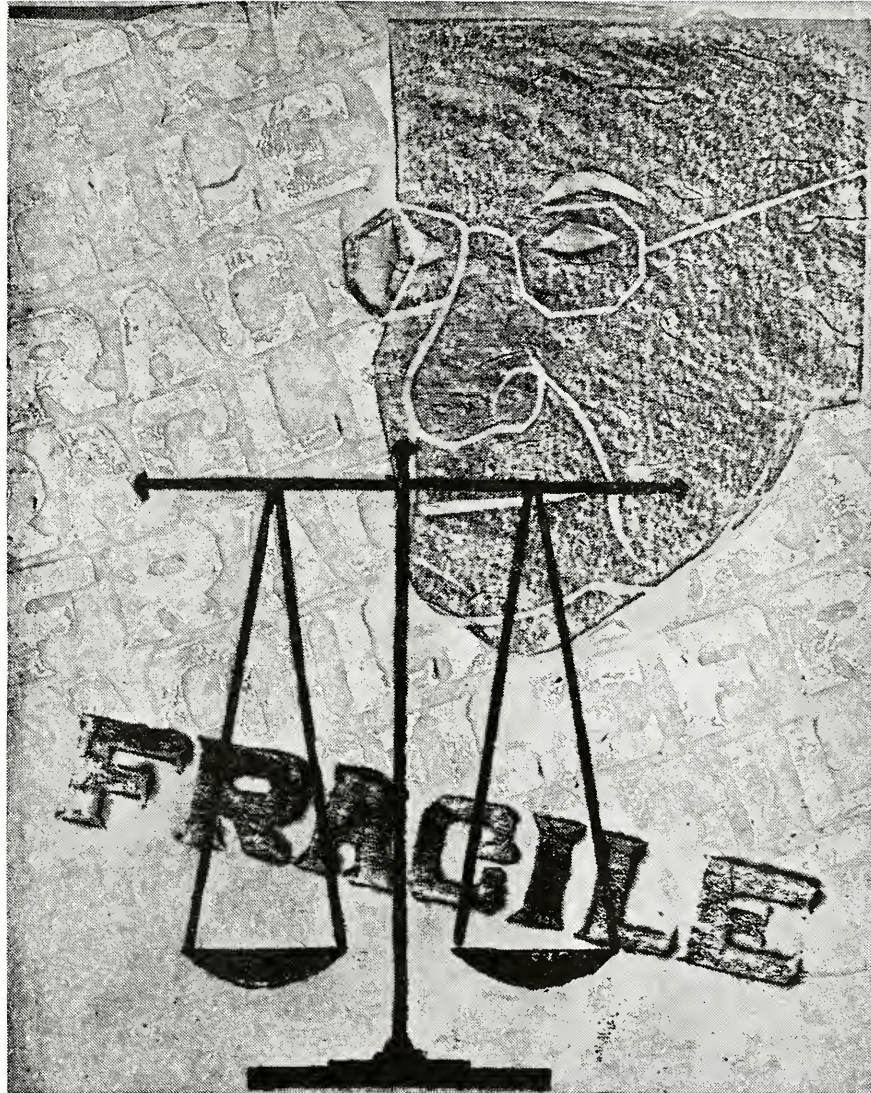
Why are the three blind mice so persecuted? Why are they hounded until they turn at bay and attack their attackers only to be viciously punished for their audacity? This is because it must be, because that is the way of human life. The mice, blinded by some haphazard Fate or malicious Chance, are helpless against their massive foes. Helplessness, and bleak suffering unalleviated by the light of common sunshine or spiritual hope.

The reasons for persecution are not clear. Is it as in "Hap", by Thomas Hardy? Or is it a perverted, animalistic anti-semitism? The blind mice may function as the Jewish race of the animal world. Or perhaps they figure as that popular scapegoat, the bitterly oppressed American Negro. However these tiny victims may appear, they are most assuredly the figuring of a persecuted minority group.

"She cut off their tails with a carving knife." Cruel, bloody, degenerate in connection with "Did you ever see such a sight in your life as three blind mice?" Is this blood-thirsty degeneracy in a child's song a mirrored reflection of the canine devour canine world of the adult? Certainly, there is ample argument for this theory. But mice without their tails, even though the pain may be for a moment intense, tailless mice are not totally helpless. Ah, exclaims the perceptive reader, but three blind, tailless mice are pitiful creatures indeed. And there is the tragedy of the song.

As we have seen, in both "Three Blind Mice" and "Mulberry Bush", children's songs neatly parallel the drudgery, the shame, the cruelty, the pain of the adult world. Is it right to expose young innocents to such a world at such a tender age? That, dear reader, I leave up to you.

Louise Dougherty



"Thou art weighed in the balance . . ." Old Testament: Daniel, v. 27.

*It is early.
Outside, there calls a meadowlark —
He feels the pulse of spring, of life.
The trees blossom, buds swelled near bursting.
Grass and other vegetation strain to break through the
Earth. If one listens, one can almost hear the
Growth of green coming up, and roots going down —
All a sharing of Nature.
The sun inches upward in its climb; it, too,
Sharing its warmth and radiance with all matter on
earth.*

*Within man comes the need to share, to be a part of
Another being. And why not? Should man alone be
Different from the rest of Nature's creations?
Ah! Her prime creation!*

*No. Man needs, also, to share.
How? One seeks and finds a sharer —
Another seeks and finds nothing —
He, with all the teeming activity of life about,
Cannot face the emptiness, and obliterated himself,
Or he withdraws to himself and the solitude,
and stays.*

*One must not look too hard: disappointment and
Rejection both prove hard lessons.*

*But then,
It is early —
Outside, there calls a meadowlark —
And we have much to learn.*

"TO MY FAVORITE DAISY"

*Twilight is a sigh,
a pause to whisper
At the center of the circle that is day:
Daisies folding face up
to drink in the purple-greying air.*

*The sky is an opal, faintly glowing;
a muted rainbow, changing
as evening into night.*

*Pink chimes roll off into pearly clouds,
And a smile spreads its warmth,
as contented day kisses night, at twilight.*

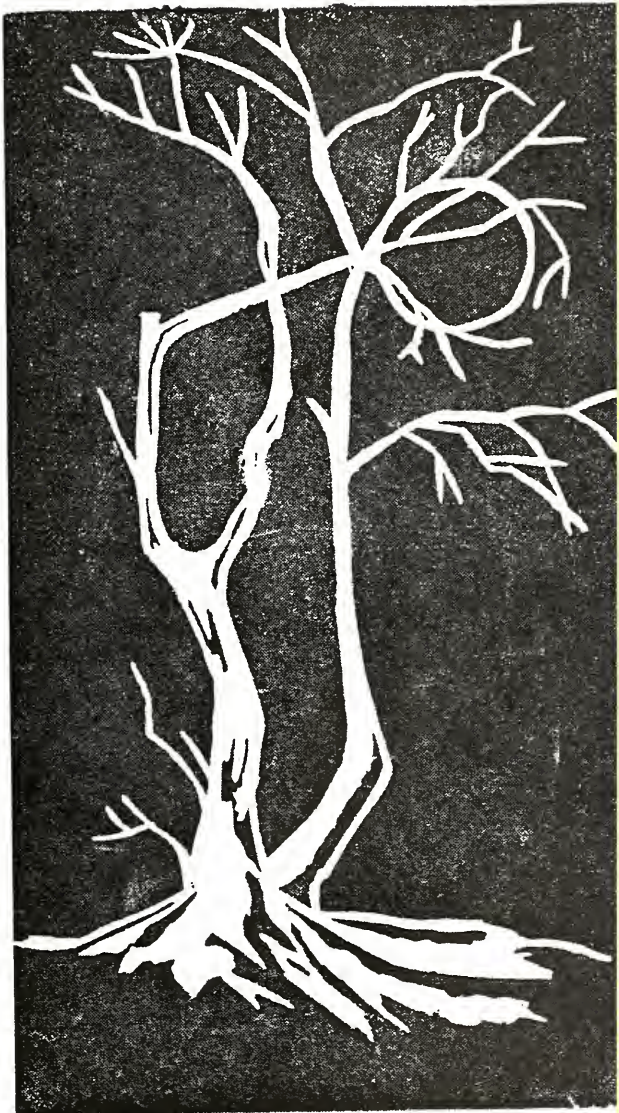
Tulita Owen

Salli Akers

SHATTERED ILLUSION

Six shining stars in a closed circle,
An intangible bond intertwining each.
Six shining stars in a deceitful space,
A dormant mist violently emerges.
Six shining stars in a moment of awareness,
A shattered illusion silently falls.
Four shining stars in a closed circle,
An infinite sky . . . two wandering stars.
The circle was too small???
The bond was too weak!!!

Brenda Murray





Maybe I was wrong in trying to cage the sky; he belonged to no one but the wind and freedom. All he'd said was "So long," and walked out of my life without looking back. That was all there was to it, except the bad taste, the emptiness, the need to cry forever and ever. . . .

Faithfully, the stage was still there, waiting silently to hear my problems and absorb. Sometimes when my mood was right, the light board switches responded to my touch and the whole auditorium smiled. In other moods, darkness remained, listening while I related my story, or sobbed. The eternity of the audience engulfed my emptiness, making it insignificant, and no more tears would come.

"I know why," he said.

I wasn't startled as he moved into the pool of moonlight spread out before me on the stage floor. And I looked up into his face that held the compassion for a universe of suffering in crystal blue eyes, that might have cried with mine.

"Do you?" I asked.

"You looked so lonely."

"How long have you been watching me?"

"For a while." He sat in front of me, the moon choosing strands of his black hair to color shades of blue. "I could say it will soon all be better, but it wouldn't help now."

"You're right." And the tears came again at wondering if life was forever pain and solitude.

He reached out and wiped a tear from my cheek. "You come here often," he stated quietly. "I've always wanted to speak to you."

Through my tears I watched him carefully. I had never seen him before, yet there are many people I've never seen before.

"The stage is my friend," I told him. "It listens when no one else cares."

"I know."

"If this theatre could speak it could tell things about me that no one ever knew."

He smiled.

I stood and walked around the open puddle to the edge of the stage. A car went by on the dark street outside.

"Would you like to talk about it?" he asked gently. "His name is Steve, isn't it?"

I wasn't surprised that he knew. "It was just a bad scene. I had no right to try to own the sky."

"Here you own the whole world."

"Only a corner of it." I turned and sighed.

He shook his head in disagreement, but said nothing.

"I tried to make it the whole world once. But the real world dragged me back out."

"If the world claims all of you, why can't you ask for a small portion, like the sky, in repayment?"

"I wish it worked that way, but. . . ."

There were noises back stage—people in the shop. I looked up as a light came on and the large shop door swung open. Mike's head appeared around the corner. "Who're you talking to?"

I glanced down at the empty pool of moonlight. "Myself."

Maggie Parker

